

## Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation District

### Trailer & Towing Safety Policy (Draft for Review)

**Application:** All employees of the Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District, including regular full-time, part-time, exempt, non-exempt, seasonal, and temporary employees.

**Effective Date:** *[Insert following Board Approval]*

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish safe practices and clear expectations for the towing, operation, and handling of trailers used for District business. This includes utility trailers, equipment trailers, UTV trailers, mounted-equipment trailers (e.g., porta-potties), and rented or leased equipment such as the CWDG woodchipper. This policy supplements the District's Vehicle Use Policy and ensures compliance with DOT, OSHA, ANSI, and manufacturer safety requirements.

#### 2. Definitions

**Trailer:** Any trailer owned, leased, or rented by the District, including equipment trailers, UTV trailers, mounted-equipment trailers, and specialized equipment trailers.

**Qualified Operator:** A District employee who has received documented training in towing safety, load securement, trailer operation, and emergency procedures.

**Tow Vehicle:** A District vehicle or approved POV used to tow a trailer.

**Load Securement:** Proper placement, locking, and securing of equipment or materials on a trailer in accordance with FMCSA cargo securement standards.

**Note:** Trailers temporarily converted into parade floats for community events are not covered under this policy. Any such use must be separately authorized and governed by event-specific safety requirements.

#### 3. General Requirements

- **Trailer Use** — Trailers may only be used for legitimate District business.
- **Qualified Operators Only** — Only qualified District employees may tow or operate trailers.
- **Regulatory Compliance** — Operators must comply with all applicable DOT, OSHA, ANSI, and state motor vehicle laws.

- **Manufacturer Instructions** — Operators must follow all manufacturer instructions and safety guidance for the specific trailer.
- **Passenger Prohibition** — No passengers may ride in or on any trailer at any time. Trailers are not designed or approved for human transport, and no exceptions will be permitted.
- **Safe Operation** — Trailers must be operated in a manner that protects District property, staff, and the public.

#### 4. Operator Qualifications

To be considered a qualified operator, an employee must:

- **Valid License** — Hold a valid driver's license.
- **Experience or Training** — Have experience towing trailers or receive documented training before towing.
- **Safety Briefing** — Complete the District's Trailer & Towing Safety Briefing.
- **Competency** — Demonstrate understanding of load securement, weight distribution, and safe towing practices.
- **Manager Approval** — Be approved by the District Manager or designee.

*No exceptions to operator qualification requirements are permitted.*

#### 5. Tow Vehicle Requirements

- **Tow Rating** — The tow vehicle must be rated to safely tow the trailer's GVWR.
- **Correct Hitch** — The correct hitch type must be used (e.g., ball hitch, pintle hook, lunette eye).
- **Safety Chains** — Safety chains must be crossed and secured.
- **Lighting** — Brake lights, turn signals, and running lights must be functional.
- **Trailer Brakes** — Trailer brakes (if equipped) must be tested before travel.
- **Pre-Trip Inspection** — Operators must perform a pre-trip inspection before each use.

#### 6. Load Securement Requirements

Operators must follow FMCSA cargo securement principles:

- **Load Balance** — Ensure the load is properly centered and balanced.
- **Locking Mechanisms** — Verify all locking mechanisms (pins, straps, collars, clamps) are engaged.
- **Loose Items** — Remove or secure loose tools or materials.
- **Recheck** — Recheck securement after the first 100 feet and periodically thereafter.
- **Mounted Equipment** — For mounted-equipment trailers (e.g., porta-potties, chipper), ensure all attachments are locked and stable.

## 7. Required Training – Trailer & Towing Safety Briefing

**All operators must complete a documented briefing covering:**

- **Towing fundamentals:** safe speeds, stopping distance, turning, sway control, backing, and use of spotters.
- **Load securement:** FMCSA basics, locking systems, weight distribution, and rechecking procedures.
- **Equipment-specific instruction:** hitching, safety features, load ratings, and trailer-specific hazards.
- **Hazard awareness:** pinch points, crush hazards, line-of-fire risks, and required PPE.
- **Emergency procedures:** stopping operations, lowering loads, contacting service providers, and avoiding unauthorized repairs.

## 8. Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist

Operators must complete a pre-trip inspection that includes:

- Tires
- Lights
- Hitch
- Safety Chains
- Brake Controller
- Load Securement
- Attachments

- Hydraulics

## **9. Post-Use Requirements**

- Clean Trailer
- Damage Inspection
- Report Maintenance
- Return Equipment
- Document Usage

## **10. Accidents and Incidents**

Any accident, equipment failure, or near-miss involving a trailer must be reported immediately to the District Manager and documented in accordance with the Vehicle Use Policy.

## **11. Enforcement**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in loss of trailer-operation privileges and/or disciplinary action consistent with District policy.